



PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI, & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

This spring, the Panhandle continued to experience a high level of joblessness as a result of the U.S. economic slowdown, as evidenced by its 8.8 percent seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in March. *Manufacturing* has endured the largest job losses, losing 390 jobs since March 2001. Approximately half the job losses were in *Lumber & Wood Products*; the other half were in a variety of manufacturing industries especially electronics, fabricated metals, and publishing. The *Retail Trade* sector—stores, restaurants, bars, and other retailers—endured the second-largest number of job losses, losing 360 jobs. The recession caused consumers to reduce spending at stores and restaurants, resulted in fewer tourists visiting the region, and forced national catalog retailer Coldwater Creek to cut jobs in Bonner County. The *Mining* sector lost 300 jobs at silver mines, mining services companies, and mining companies' corporate headquarters since March 2001.

At the present times, glimmers of hope suggest that the region is emerging from the economic shadows of recent months.

SPECIAL TOPIC

Panhandle Population Growth Slows

The U.S. Census Bureau recently released population estimates for counties in July 2001. The populations of all Idaho counties at the time of the last census in April 2000 and in July 2001 are shown in FYI Table 1 on page 22. The populations of Panhandle counties are shown in Panhandle Table 2 on page 8, which compares the average growth per year in the 1990s to the growth between July 2000 and July 2001, and compares the growth rates in the Panhandle to the growth rates in Idaho and the U.S. The population growth in the Panhandle was exceptionally strong in the early 1990s when California's economic troubles, riot, earthquakes, and high cost of living persuaded many Californians to move to Idaho. During the last few years, troubles in the Panhandle's timber and mining industries caused population declines in some communities, especially in Shoshone and Benewah Counties.

Panhandle Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

	March 2002*	Feb 2001	March 2001	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	92,950	91,930	89,620	1.1	3.7
Unemployed	8,150	7,240	7,430	12.6	9.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	8.8	7.9	8.3		
Total Employment	84,800	84,690	82,190	0.1	3.2
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	92,120	90,600	88,880	1.7	3.6
Unemployed	10,630	9,670	9,950	9.9	3.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	11.5	10.7	11.2		
Total Employment	81,490	80,930	78,930	0.7	3.2
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	65,620	65,030	64,960	0.9	1.0
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	12,580	12,530	13,400	0.4	-6.1
Mining	540	530	840	1.9	-35.7
Construction	3,840	3,690	3,970	4.1	-3.3
Manufacturing	8,200	8,310	8,590	-1.3	-4.5
Lumber & Wood Products	3,790	3,960	3,990	-4.3	-5.0
All Other Manufacturing	4,410	4,350	4,600	1.4	-4.1
<i>Service-Producing Industries</i>	53,040	52,500	51,560	1.0	2.9
Transportation	1,330	1,350	1,320	-1.5	0.8
Communication & Utilities	1,080	1,060	1,100	1.9	-1.8
Wholesale Trade	2,140	2,090	2,130	2.4	0.5
Retail Trade	13,850	13,700	14,210	1.1	-2.5
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	2,700	2,710	2,500	-0.4	8.0
Service & Miscellaneous	17,390	17,170	16,020	1.3	8.6
Government Administration	8,940	8,810	8,580	1.5	4.2
Government Education	5,610	5,610	5,700	0.0	-1.6

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Benewah County

- The City of St. Maries recently received a \$500,000 grant to complete a \$2 million downtown improvement project. The city is installing new water and sewer pipes, sidewalks, paving, and streetlights. Timber Plus, the St. Maries economic development organization, started the downtown project two years ago. The city also received a \$190,000 grant from the Idaho Department of Transportation a couple of years ago to help with the downtown street improvements. Some of the improvements are funded by a \$170,000 LID (local improvement district) that downtown property owners approved last year.
- Benewah Community Hospital in St. Maries also received a \$390,000 grant to replace its 50-year-old surgery with a larger state-of-the-art surgery.
- Heyburn State Park, located along the southern part of Lake Coeur d'Alene and accessed by Highway 95 near Plummer, is purchasing an 87-passenger cruise boat after a successful trial last year when the park rented the boat to give cruises. The cruises drew large numbers of visitors who saw the park's historical and natural resource features from a new

Panhandle Table 2: Population Growth in Idaho Panhandle County Population Growth between 2000 & 2001 Compared to Average Year in 1990s

	Population July 2001	Population July 2000	Change 2000 - 2001	Net People Added 2000 - 2001
Panhandle	182,140	179,398	1.5%	2,742
Benewah Co.	8,995	9,198	-2.2%	-203
Bonner Co.	37,479	37,020	1.2%	459
Boundary Co.	9,926	9,918	0.1%	8
Kootenai Co.	112,297	109,525	2.5%	2,772
Shoshone Co.	13,443	13,737	-2.1%	-294
State of Idaho	1,321,006	1,299,258	1.7%	21,748
United States	284,796,887	282,124,631	0.9%	2,672,256

	Population April 2000	Population April 1990	Average Change Per Year 1990 - 2000	Net People Added Per Year 1990 - 2000
Panhandle	178,333	126,617	3.5%	5,172
Benewah Co.	9,171	7,937	1.5%	123
Bonner Co.	36,835	26,622	3.3%	1,021
Boundary Co.	9,871	8,332	1.7%	154
Kootenai Co.	108,685	69,795	4.5%	3,889
Shoshone Co.	13,771	13,931	-0.1%	-16
State of Idaho	1,293,953	1,006,734	2.5%	28,722
United States	281,421,906	248,765,170	1.2%	3,265,674

Source: US Census Bureau

perspective. This summer, the park's boat will offer cruises to Worley, Harrison, and St. Maries for special events including Mother's Day, the Benewah County Fair, Paul Bunyan Days in St. Maries, and Pig Out in the Park in Harrison. The boat also is available for private charters. Some cruises will provide meals prepared by local businesses. The park recently rebuilt the docks at its Rocky Point marina.

- Heyburn State Park also is preparing for an influx of visitors from the 71-mile Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes. The biking and hiking trail, built along an old railroad bed, runs northeast from Plummer to Mullan in Shoshone County near the Idaho-Montana border and bisects the park. Although the portion of the trail that runs through the park will not be completed until next year, the near completion of the trail is expected to draw some visitors this summer and many more in following years.
- The Pacific Northwest Fiber (PNF) strawboard manufacturing plant in Plummer shut down at the end of April, putting about 30 people out of work for an indefinite period. Poor market conditions for strawboard also forced PNF to delay a planned \$500,000 upgrade and expansion of the plant.

Kootenai County

- Three businesses recently opened in the landmark Wilson Pharmacy Building on the northeast corner of Third and Sherman in downtown Coeur d'Alene. Wilson Pharmacy was a fixture in downtown Coeur

d'Alene from 1904 to 1990. Then Wilson's Variety opened there, but closed in December 2001. The first tenant to open was Coeur d'Alene City Perc, a coffee house with a 1930s-motif and a complete espresso bar, occupying the rear and basement of the Wilson Pharmacy Building. The coffee house employs five people. Now operating in the east side of the building is the Timber Creek Café featuring a Northwest lodge look and an old-fashioned soda fountain. The café employs six people. Merging into the café is the showroom of Crossley's Fine Interiors. The upholsterer and furniture maker moved its showroom from 303 North Fourth Street into the west side of the Wilson building. Crossley's designs and custom-makes furniture and window treatments. The interior design store also sells draperies, bedding, accessories, and gifts. After the move, Crossley's will continue to operate its furniture and upholstery shop at its Fourth Street location. Crossley's plans to add more people to its current staff of seven.

- The Hot Rod Café at 1610 Schneidmiller Avenue in Post Falls is building a 13,000-square-foot expansion to provide more bar and banquet space. The expansion will be completed by June 1.
- Ziegler Lumber Co. is adding a 32,000-square-foot warehouse at the back of its 45,000-square-foot Ziggy's Building Materials store at 2121 North Highway 41 in Post Falls. The warehouse should be completed by the end of May.

Shoshone County

- As of April, the 102-year-old Sunshine Mine has no employees. Only a year and a half ago, the Sunshine employed more than 240 people making it Shoshone County's largest employer. The mine closed in February 2001, but eight employees remained to maintain the mine. Persistently low silver prices make it impossible to justify the large electricity bills required to operate the massive pumps that keep one of the world's deepest mines from flooding. With the pumps now turned off, the Sunshine slowly is filling up with water. Once a mine is flooded, it takes enormous amounts of money to pump it dry, so silver prices will have to rise much higher to allow the Sunshine to shine again. Only two silver mines remain open in Shoshone County—the Lucky Friday Mine with approximately 60 employees and the Galena Mine with more than 200 employees.

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